

Welcome address

The Belgian Brain Council organizes biennially a 2-day meeting, called the *Belgian Brain Congress*. This meeting is exceptional because to its extensive multidisciplinary nature as it gathers neurobiologists, clinicians, paramedics, patients and their representatives as well as the pharmaceutical industry to discuss cutting-edge and comprehensive information on topics related to brain dysfunctions at large.

This year's edition is also innovative in that, for the first time, the BBC has joined forces with another society, the Belgian Pain Society. The 1st day will therefore focus on Pain and Headaches, and address the clinical, neurobiological, psycho-social, imaging and management features of pain disorders. A second major topic on the 1st day will be addictions which are also handled in a multidisciplinary way. On the 2nd day the immune disorders of the nervous system, in particular multiple sclerosis, are on the programme as well as two special lectures on stroke risk in women and brain-computer interface.

As usual, plenary sessions will alternate with smaller interactive workshops. Posters will be on exhibit during the whole duration of the congress; the most interesting will be selected for a brief oral presentation and the 3 best posters will receive a 250€ prize each. There will be ample time for discussion, including with representatives of patients' associations at their respective booths.

The meeting has gained support from decision makers as the opening ceremony will be enlightened by the Belgian Minister for Social Affairs Laurette Onkelinx, the European Commissioner for Health & Consumers John Dalli and Michel Goldman, CEO of IMI (Innovative Medicines Initiative).

The venue, the MCE Congress Centre, is centrally located in Brussels and offers for accompanying persons ample opportunity to visit local cultural exhibitions such as the Horta Museum, but also to do some shopping.

Finally, in line with the commitment of the Belgian Brain Council for a more efficient spending of public and private money for research on the brain and its disorders, we have decided to keep our meeting as low-cost and ecological as possible, refraining from unnecessary expenses. You may thus miss some of the glamour of other congresses, but discover an appealing scientific programme with expert international and national speakers and moderators. Don't miss this opportunity, we would be honoured to have you with us!

Jean Schoenen, BBC President

Bart Morlion, BPS President